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BOOK REVIEWS.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NATURAL LAW. By HENRY WOOD. Boston: Lee & Shepard, Publishers, 1894.

It is not the function of a law magazine to review economic literature. Natural law is not a subject with which the lawyer deals, and yet, since we have taken the trouble to read this book, and since we know several members of the bar who are more or less interested in economic subjects, we desire to say that it is the worst of a very bad lot that shall be nameless. The writer seems to be imbued with one idea, and one idea only, and that is, that *natural law* must never be interfered with under any circumstances and conditions. Individual lines of action "are often inharmonious and contrary, while the operations of natural law are consistent and harmonious." What this natural law is about which Mr. WOOD talked so fluently we do not know, and we have a suspicion the author does not know, either. For instance, what does he mean by this: "Its different factors may modify or counteract, but never oppose each other, for truth cannot be in opposition to truth. Its only warfare is with error, and its complete victory is simply a question of time." Or, again, what is meant by, "Natural law, being normal, is truthful;" or, of the natural law in the economic realm "as one of the many subdivisions of the universal natural law or the grand unity of truth." Shade of Sir Henry Maine! Would that that author, when he wrote the history of the ideas which, during the different stages of the world's development, have gathered around the idea of the word "natural," could have seen this curious conglomeration and mixture of ideas, which, revolving in the mind of Mr. WOOD, came to light in these pages.

We speak thus harshly of this work, which we would otherwise ignore, for the following reasons: The science of political economy or economics is a noble science—as noble, perhaps,

as the science of law, and certainly requiring just as deep research, just as efficient study, and just as clear a mind. Suppose that, to-day, there should be written a work on the law of contracts, which, disregarding all the decisions of the court, all that had ever been written or said, produced a work that one who had never studied law would write, would it not then be the duty of every man who cared for the science of law to condemn that book? The book and the writer would be masquerading under a title which they had no right to. Now, this sort of thing is what we believe only happens too frequently in political economy or economics. Men entirely unfamiliar with the literature of the subject, or who have never taken the trouble to examine the facts of the actual world, write out their own ideas, or what they are pleased to call ideas, gathered with little trouble and less thought, and label the whole "Political Economy" or "Economics," or some title by which the innocent reader will be deluded into thinking that the author is a student of the subject. This we do not consider as fair. It would not be fair in law, and it is not fair in economics. It is not fair to the men who are spending their lives trying to make the economic and social laws plain. Such a book as this tends to throw ridicule around the valuable labors of others. Publishers like the ones whose names are on this work should regret that it is there.

W. D. L.

CASES OF CONSTITUTIONAL LAW. Part I. With Notes by JAMES BRADLEY THAYER. LL.D., Weld Professor of Law at Harvard University. Cambridge: Charles W. Sever, 1894.

This work is the first part of a collection of cases on Constitutional Law which have been looked forward to for some time by those of the profession interested in that subject. The high position of the writer gave promise of a valuable work, and the result, so far, more than comes up to our expectations.

Case books from the Harvard Law School have become so familiar to members of the profession, that it is almost